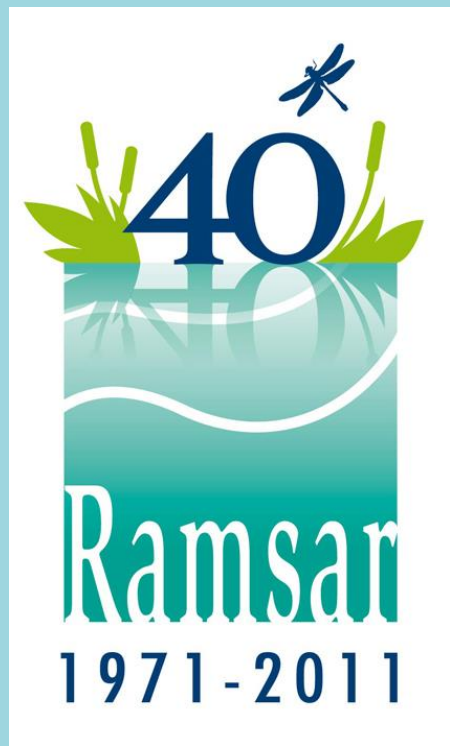
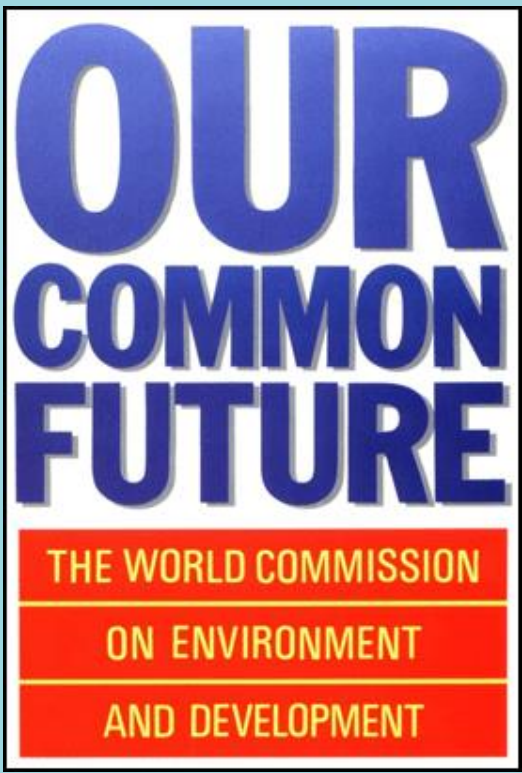


The Oceans Compact:

Global Environmental Governance and the United Nations

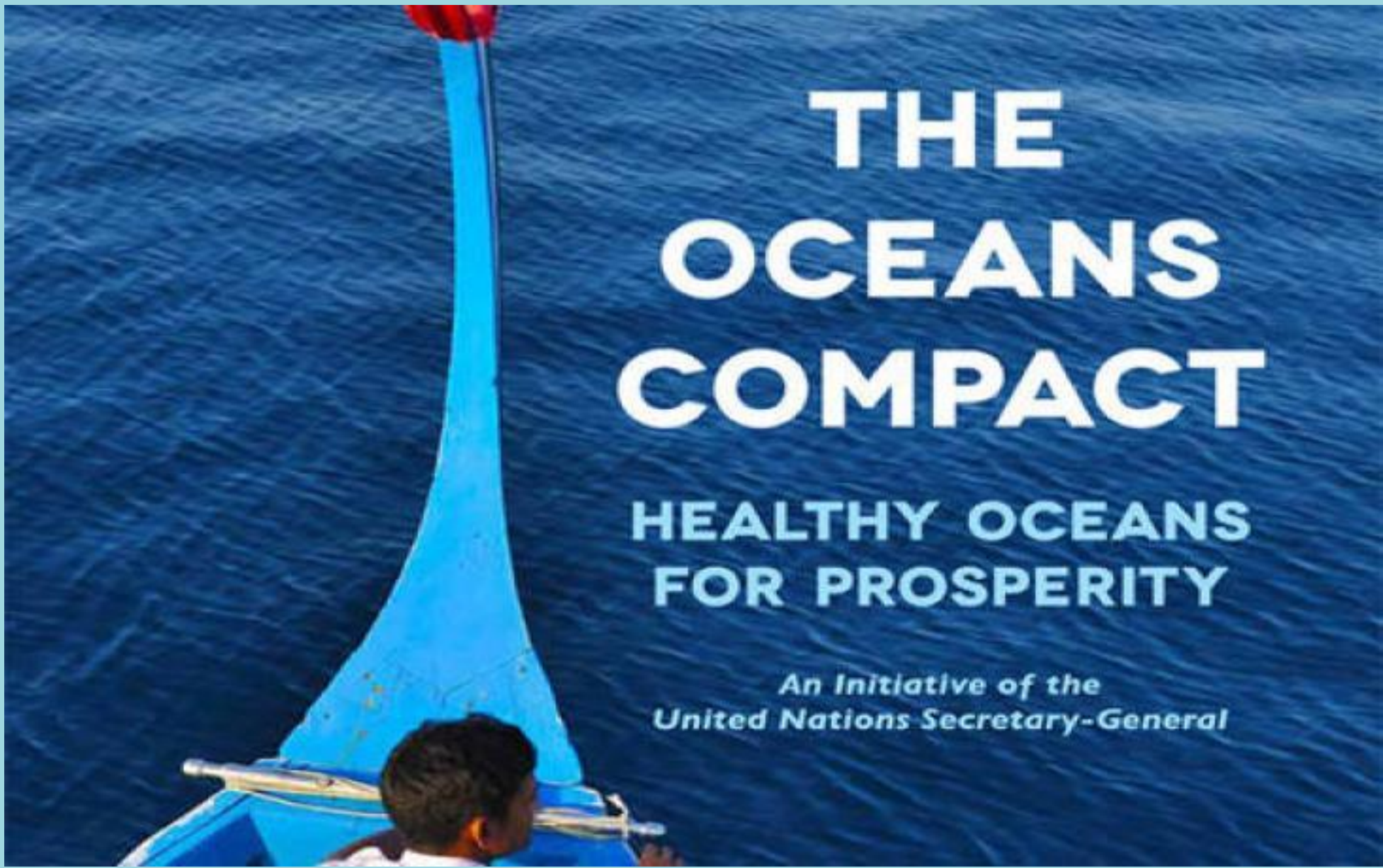
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United Nations Framework



Core Challenges to Environmental Governance

- Systemic obstacles.** Issues rooted in traditional political and legal systems are less malleable or open to change.
- Procedural obstacles.** Result of policy creation and implementation in attempts to address environmental concerns.
- Inherent obstacles.** Associated with the environment itself, being its own entity and physically uncontrollable in many respects.
- State capacity.** State capacity is far more complex than the reasonable ability of a state to enter into an environmental agreement in good faith, extending to factors of social and economic concern beyond the political realm.
- Lack of knowledge.** Collecting, analyzing, implementing, and sharing knowledge is an integral part of adapting to the many obstacles of governing the environment through manmade policy.



Unique Place in United Nations Discourse

The Oceans Compact is the direct result of actions called for by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It can therefore be classified as belonging within the sustainability discourse at the United Nations. However, being an ocean specific initiative, it will need to follow rules and norms of the current oceans regime, which centers on UNCLOS, a document primarily concerned with political issues like sovereignty and and economic concerns, namely territory privileges in different levels of open water. The Oceans Compact is therefore straddling the line where UN-Water and sustainable development intersect, creating a new realm of possibilities by making connections between two different, yet closely related, pieces of international governance.

Why Now?

- Mounting obstacles.** Global environmental change, rapid population growth, lack of effective waste management, pollution, expansion of fishing territories, over fishing, sovereignty questions as a result of rising sea levels or melting Artic water ways, potential conflict resulting from scarcity, deprivation, or resource capture models.
- Insufficiency of current policy.** UN-Water is soft power, lacks binding authority; UNCLOS predates the Brundtland Report, neglects to include the growing sustainability discourse in UN's most powerful water convention, mechanisms in place to arbitrate issues of sovereignty require lengthy and time consuming processes, making UNCLOS ill equipped to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world.
- Renewed focus on sustainability.** One of the outcomes of Rio +20 was a commitment to create a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to pair with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as their deadline for realization in 2015 draws near.

Potential

UN-Water is poised to play a crucial role in the development of more interactive governance. The flexibility of its soft framework is capable of supporting more collaborative efforts. Through involvement on local and regional levels, it would become more accessible and better suited to meet the needs of communities. This kind of interactive water governance would created partnerships, provide legitimacy to social instruments in water management, and improve capacity to care for and realize responsible ownership over water sources thus poising UN-Water to play an important role in bringing different players together.

Why Interactive Governance?

- A **broader range of interaction** extending to actors outside the government lends to a greater wealth and breadth of knowledge, which will contribute to understanding the importance of sustainable development for the well being of the state in the short and long term, specifically in terms of social well being, but also in terms of long term economic success by not destroying a viable source of natural income.
- The **creation of global objectives** coupled with the **increased sharing of information** and therefore exposure to the importance of sustainability to the security of the state, will serve to supersede the interests of the state alone and **create an environment conducive to more global action**.
- Interactive governance will **foster accountability and transparency** through mutual reliance of social components and government actors on each other for the realization of their common objectives, creating a **system of checks and balances** by which actors can potentially be held accountable to the various partnerships.
- The **flexibility** of UN-Water's soft powers lends itself to the informality of interactions occurring in an interactive system, allowing it to **adapt**.
- The Oceans Compact seeks to create an oceans regime that **goes beyond instruments of law**, but into the private sector and industry, scientific research and elsewhere. In this respect, the Oceans Compact is, on its own, seeking to create a **more diverse governance system** than previously seen in the UN, and many of its key tenants align with aspects of interactive governance, making them potentially compatible.